

that, in fact, monies are spent properly for the purposes for which people pay into this fund and for which those of us who make the policy on this matter expect them to be paid.

The agency must be allowed to function, and I would hope that those needs could be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally to receive a message.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington) assumed the Chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

WILDLIFE AND SPORT FISH RESTORATION PROGRAMS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the great leader in the House.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Chairman, last year, congressional Republicans fought tooth-and-nail to cut waste, fraud and abuse out of a bloated Federal budget. We were successful, but we have only just begun.

This year we remain vigilant in our crusade to return accountability to the Federal Government, and, today, thanks to the chairman of the Committee on Resources (Mr. YOUNG), we are taking another important step by bringing this bill to the floor.

This measure will eliminate waste, fraud and abuse at the Fish and Wildlife Service and restore integrity and accountability to our conservation programs.

Last century, America's sportsmen agreed to excise taxes on sporting equipment so that others could enjoy hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. In doing so, they placed their trust in the Federal Government to administer these funds, their hard-earned dollars, for State conservation efforts.

This system worked for decades, but this administration has shattered that trust. A yearlong committee investigation revealed that half the money set aside to administer these programs, over \$15 million, was improperly used.

But do not just take my word for it. The GAO report, and I quote, "to our knowledge, this is, if not the worst, one of the worst managed programs we have encountered."

Mr. Chairman, this bill ensures that the government manages the people's money wisely. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and restore trust be-

tween America's sportsmen and their government.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from California for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, while I support this bill, I do have some concerns about it, and at the appropriate time, I will offer an amendment that I think can set the stage for addressing those concerns.

As the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and others have noted, this bill was prompted by information developed by the Committee on Resources through the oversight process.

As a result of that oversight, it became clear that it would be desirable to revisit the underlying statutes at issue here; although, I think it is also clear, as my colleague from California suggests, that some of the charges about the actions of the current administration have been exaggerated, and that those folks making those charges have failed to point out similar actions that occurred during prior administrations.

The programs of assistance to state and wildlife agencies addressed by this bill are very valuable for my home State of Colorado and, of course, for all the other States that make up our union. This bill deals with a very important subject that deserves careful scrutiny by the Committee on Resources and by the whole House itself.

I do think that Congress does need to reconsider the degree of discretion that current law allows the Interior Department with regard to the administration of these programs.

However, in responding to the ways the Interior Department has used its discretion in the past, I fear that the bill may go too far in the other direction.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly understand the purpose of limiting the amount of money that can be spent on administration, because obviously, what is spent that way will not be available for the substantive purposes of the programs, but at the same time, we need to recognize the administration is necessary and adequate administration is essential to avoid the risk of misuse of taxpayer funds, either by the Department of Interior or by other parties.

That is why I am concerned when the Interior Department says that limits set by the bill would likely require reduction in the number of people who would administer these programs because adequate staffing is necessary to administer any program.

I am also concerned that the bill's provisions are too inflexible and too detailed and that even more specific requirements are suggested in parts of the committee's report on the bill.

Accountability is essential, but excessive paperwork for its own sake can

eat up resources that could be put to more productive uses. And I do not think we should make it impossible for the Interior Department to respond to new developments, such as the very significant and very desirable increase in the scope of these programs that would come from the enactment of H.R. 701, the CARA legislation which the Committee on Resources has already approved, and which I hope will come to the floor of the full House in the near future.

As I said, I support the bill. I will do so not because I think it is perfect, but because I think it is desirable to make some progress on this subject.

It is my hope that we can further refine the bill as we proceed through the legislative process with the other body and, if necessary, in conference. However, should that not occur, our committee and the House may be better advised to return to this subject next year.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to remind both of my speakers on that side of the aisle my amendment raises the fund from \$10 million to \$14 million with a \$5 million grant that is \$19 million, and I had information from the Department that said that they could operate very well with \$19 million.

We expect a decrease of personnel probably of 23 members of the total aid program, and that is all. What we are trying to do here is not this administration is future administrations, this administration is on its waning days, but future administrations, regardless of parties, will not have the opportunity to use these dollars that are paid in good faith by the sportsmen of America and then misspent.

Even those within the agency today have told me privately, yes, they made a mistake, and they really would suggest that we are doing the correct thing. We will review this. We will have a very simplistic audit system. I have agreed to that. We will work with those people involved and make sure that in the future time, we will be able to see where they have been able to reach those goals.

In closing, may I suggest, I have asked them time and time and time again, give me the figures where they need it and how they want to spend it, and the agency itself has been reluctant. In fact, they have stonewalled us. I am trying to get those figures. I am working very hard.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN).

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the accountability and responsibility to stop wasteful spending and mismanagement of wildlife and sport fishing funds. The impropriety of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife